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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 MFA-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 INL-00 USNW-00 DOTE-00
DS-00 EAP-00 EB-00 FFAE-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
IO-00 LAB-01 VCE-00 NSAE-00 OIC-02 DHS-00 PA-00
IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 ASDS-00 ECA-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00
DRL-01 NFAT-00 SAS-00 SWCI-00 /004W

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O 181658Z JUN 03

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO AMEMBASSY ACCRA IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0507

INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

1141USAFSAS VAIHINGEN GE

7TH SOSC VAIHINGEN GE

830AD ALBROOK AFS PM

CIA WASHDC

DEPT OF JUSTICE WASH DC

DIA WASHINGTON DC

DOJ WASHDC

FBI WASHDC

JOINT STAFF WASHDC

NSC WASH DC

SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

~~RELEASED IN PART~~

~~B1, 1.4(D)~~

~~SECRET~~ MONROVIA 000705

ACCRA PLEASE PASS TO ARIETTI; DEPT FOR AF SNYDER AND
BRIDGEWATER, ALSO DS/ICI/PII, DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2008

TAGS: PGOV, ASEC, PREL, KWCI, PHUM, PINR, LI, UN

SUBJECT: LIBERIA'S OPPOSITION REQUESTS IMMEDIATE
PEACEKEEPING FORCE, STATES THREATS INCREASED SINCE
INDICTMENT

REF: A) MONROVIA 646 B) MONROVIA 674

Classified By: Douglas Kent, A/DCM for reason 1.5 (D).

1. (S) SUMMARY: The fighting has ended in the Monrovia area
and life has returned to normal in a business, workaday
sense. Politics may never again be business as usual,
however, unless and until a credible international
stabilization force is established here to protect all
political activists, who now are in virtual hiding, in fear
of Taylor's "bully boys" since the recent fighting. [redacted] the

U.S. Embassy presence has prevented a more aggressive and

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. HEDGBETH, DAS, A/ISS
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL

CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)

DECLASSIFY AFTER: 18 JUN 2023

APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED

REASON(S): B1, 1.4(D)

DATE/CASE ID: 08 SEP 2008 200604067

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN S BLODGETT
DATE/CASE ID: 31 JUL 2007 200604067

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open tracking down of those who previously openly voiced opposition to the Taylor regime. After the publication of the sealed indictment, Monrovia teetered on the brink of a serious bloodletting by Taylor's militia, averted only by his quick return to Monrovia the same day. All but the most rabid Taylorites are urging an active U.S. participation in any and all phases of the ceasefire's agreed-upon monitoring mechanisms and stabilization force as the essential ingredient to ensure credibility and efficacy among all parties and to protect innocent Liberians from reprisals.

END SUMMARY.

Plea for International Peacekeepers

2. (S) [REDACTED] called on A/DCM June 12 to discuss what he termed "pressing concerns." Visibly nervous, he explained he was speaking on behalf of the coalition of five opposition parties and that they were nervous about coming to the Embassy. He urged the U.S. Embassy to press for immediate deployment of an international peacekeeping force to protect Liberians from Government of Liberia (GOL) security forces, especially the irregular militia troops which have been more noticeable in Monrovia since the attack on the capital by rebel forces of Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

Fear and Loathing

3. (S) [REDACTED] stated that he and other opposition politicians have been keeping a very low profile recently because they have been repeatedly harrassed by GOL security forces. He said these armed men have told opposition politicians "you are causing all this trouble," referring to the LURD advances into the Monrovia suburbs, the flight by IDPs from the suburban IDP camps into the center of the capital, and the evacuations of foreign nationals by helicopter. [REDACTED] stated that some opposition politicians were threatened with death by these armed men, usually militias, if they spoke out in protest or engaged in any political agitation.

Visits to Embassy's Pol Section Down

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4. (S) NOTE: In fact, the usual regular and frequent calls - by cell phone and by personal visitation to the Embassy compound - [redacted]

to the political section have dissipated. Previous to the increased fighting near Monrovia and ensuing tension, these individuals regularly called on the political section to expound their views, requesting Embassy/USG support, often requesting support for specific visa applications as well. Ever since the fighting left the greater Monrovia area this past week, these visitations have all but ceased. Those who do contact us urge us to meet them "off campus." END NOTE.

Putting Out Fire with Gasoline

5. (S) [redacted] opined that the opening and publicity of the indictment against Charles Taylor, while he agreed with it personally, was ill-timed and put many people in Monrovia in danger, including Ghanaian nationals resident here. [redacted] stated that it was the publication in the press and in the news media of the indictment, during the President's trip to Ghana for the peace talks, when "things got extremely tense." [redacted] said that many people were afraid to go home, especially those living near opposition politicians. "These militia boys just don't care," he explained. "They just start shooting everywhere, into the homes of people they think oppose their leader, and innocent people get shot too." He said that the militia were all out in the street, heavily armed with rifles and RPGs during the day and evening of June 4 when Taylor was in Ghana and the indictment was announced, threatening that if Taylor were arrested, they would start killing lots of people. [redacted] (protect) claims that if Taylor had not returned from Ghana thousands of Ghanaians would have been murdered in Liberia.

The Monrovia Cheer

6. (S) When news came of Taylor's return to Roberts airport, the militia stood down and there was a great sense of relief. [redacted] explained that this relief was what was behind all the cheering at the President's return. [redacted] claimed that at least 80% of Monrovia's oppose the President and want to see him leave. They were not cheering him when he returned because they like him, [redacted] laughed. They were cheering

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and rejoicing at his return because they knew the bloodbath threatened by his militia had been averted!

Some Post-Taylor Thoughts

7. (S) In a meeting with A/DCM on June 17, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] told A/DCM that Vice President Blah had been re-instated by President Taylor after the latter realized he had endangered his base of support from among ethnic Mano and Gio people of Nimba County, which is where Blah is from. Some of Taylor's fighters had in fact deserted after Blah was arrested, according to [REDACTED] and other sources. Now that Taylor has agreed not to head an interim government, he [REDACTED] thinks the country can pull together peacefully and that the legislature will work with the international community to construct an interim government acceptable to the vast majority of Liberians, including those represented by MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) rebels, if not LURD, about which he was not so sanguine of cooperation. Blah, in [REDACTED] view, was a good candidate for interim leader since he had the respect of most Liberians, yet no serious long term political ambitions. [REDACTED] added that Taylor had become increasingly unpopular and that when he returned from Ghana, people in the thousands indeed cheered his motorcade from the airport, but only because they knew his security thugs would not go on a killing spree in Monrovia. The representative then described the mood on the streets of Monrovia during the day and evening of June 4 in similar terms as [REDACTED] had previously.

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Only Taylor Can Call Off His Dogs

8. (S) [REDACTED] warned that Liberia needed Taylor around

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during the disarmament, however, "to keep his boys in check" and ensure that they don't commit acts of violence against civilians, especially those in the opposition or who might be considered a threat in a new regime. [REDACTED] continued that no one else could convince the militia and ARU (the Taylor-created anti-Terrorist Unit) to disarm. Once a strong peacekeeping force was in place, he could go, but not before, [REDACTED] concluded.

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A Time To Keep Your Head Down

10. (C) In a meeting June 18, [redacted] told A/DCM that [redacted] his house [redacted] had been looted by government troops who, he claimed, "were looking for me."

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[redacted] If the government's position were upheld, most opposition candidates, including Charles Brumskine, could not run.

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[redacted] He opined that despite the recently-signed ceasefire, Monrovia will be in a very tense period now during which any opposition person could be picked up on any pretext, even shot, with no repercussions, until a peacekeeping force is deployed here. He stated that Taylor's security forces were always aggressive, but are now more nervous and defensive toward those they view as opposition types who might try to take reprisals against them in a future government.

The U.S. Embassy -- The Last Bastion

11. (C) He expressed appreciation for the U.S. Embassy's presence and advocacy for human rights activists, noting that the security services would "feel no restraint" if it were not for the presence of the U.S. Embassy. Many opposition activists, he added, have moved to the Mamba Point area of Monrovia to overnight because of its proximity to the Embassy

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compound and relatively greater perceived security from the militia and security services, especially since the helicopters have been seen flying to and from the compound.

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